

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Budget Workshop

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Archie R. Cole Middle School Library

100 Cedar Avenue

East Greenwich, RI 02818

Those in attendance were Ms. Carolyn Mark, Chair; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters, Vice-Chair; Mr. Matt Plain; Mr. Jeff Dronzek; Dr. Lori McEwen; and Dr. Yan Sun. Mr. Michael Fain was absent.

Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Gail Wilcox, Director of Administration; Mr. Podraza, EGHS Principal; Mr. Seger Cole Principal; Dr. Keegan, Cole Asst Principal; Mrs. Cauley, Hanaford Principal; Mr. Giusti, Eldredge Principal; Mrs. Vaughn, Frenchtown Principal; Mr. Marcaccio, Meadowbrook Principal; Mr. Wilmarth, Director of Facilities; Cobain, Director of Athletics, and Mr. Babson, Director of Technology were also in attendance

6:30 p.m. Budget Workshop

I. Call to Order

Ms. Mark called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

II. Budget Workshops FY2018

Dr. Mercurio provided a slideshow of the FY2018 budget. The

current proposal shows an ask from the town of 4.68%. Dr. Mercurio explained this percentage is a placeholder for discussion. The school can only ask for a maximum of 4% over FY2017. A breakdown by percentage/dollar reduction was provided to show the reduction needed for asks of 4%, 3%, and 2%. Mrs. Wilcox explained the various pieces of fund balance (restricted, committed, etc.) and their potential impact on the bond rating. Restricted fund balance reserve for education has little to no effect on the bond rating. Committed and assigned funds would have a negative effect on the rating if not used for the original intent. The year-end fund balance for FY2016 was \$3,991,947. The audited FY2016 surplus amounted to \$324,986. Based on the known assumptions/estimates, it is projected the district will have a \$1.3 million deficit for FY2017.

The major assumptions from prior workshops were discussed (teachers hired at step 3 Masters degree, health/dental increases, etc.). Projected transportation costs were also shown for the next three years (based on the current number of tiers).

The Committee discussed various expenses that are out of our control (higher special education costs, all day kindergarten, etc.). Dr. Mercurio will meet with the administrative council on Monday to discuss possible cuts for FY2018. Initial cuts will start away from the classroom (maintenance, technology, etc.) and move inward. Dr. Mercurio said the principals' do not have a lot of discretionary money. All schools are seeing student increases from one year to

the next. The BEP needs to be addressed while looking at cuts in staff/programs.

Mr. Dronzek asked if the district could have flexibility paying the bus contract (i.e., pay over two fiscal years rather than one). He also asked about flexibility about paying for Chromebooks. Mr. Babson said he spoke with CDW and that is not an option.

Dr. Mercurio asked for direction from the Committee. Mr. Dronzek asked that a fund balance assumption be built in to the budget (using the average of the past three years).

The Committee asked for assumptions based on “asks” of 4%, 2%, and 0%. The 4% assumption will be provided at the next meeting on March 21st. The 2% and 0% scenarios can be provided at the March 28th meeting. Budget adoption could take place at the April 4th meeting since the budget is not due to the town until April 15th.

III. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Plain, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted

6-0 to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.

CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO
SECRETARY